

Director, FBI [redacted]

12/8/53

SAC, New York [redacted] *ACB*

[redacted] RE NY Air-tel to Bu... 11/10/53.

[redacted] was interviewed on 11/4/53 by SA MARCELLUS B.
MEYERSON. [redacted]

[redacted] At that time, he was questioned concerning his knowledge of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade which served in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. Source advised that he knew very little concerning the International Brigades which served in Spain and that he never personally met any of the Americans who served in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. [redacted]

[redacted] advised that most of the members of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, to his knowledge, were members of the American CP who travelled to Spain to fight fascism and against HITLER. He stated they received no pay for their fighting and they held no rank. [redacted]

Source advised "If their only sin was their fighting against fascism and HITLER, they are not bad fellows." He added, however, that if these Abraham Lincoln Brigade members continued to follow and support the principles of Soviet Russia and Communism following the events of World War II, it would be a different story. He explained that he felt that most of the members of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade were honest men committed to a fight against the principles of fascism and, as such, would have divorced themselves from any Soviet Russia ties after learning the true nature of Russia's intentions following WW II which intentions are similar to those held by HITLER and fascism. [redacted]

While discussing the fact that he was not acquainted with the leaders of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade or any members thereof, he recalled that he did know one WALTER SVERDLOVSKY who headed the Polish Brigade in the Spanish Civil War. He recalled the following info concerning SVERDLOVSKY: [redacted]

SVERDLOVSKY was a Soviet citizen, although a native of Poland. He served in the Red Army as a Russian officer and was very capable. Source stated that his rank was that of a Lieutenant Colonel at the time he was appointed to head the Polish Brigade of the International Brigade [redacted] served in Spain. Later, he was promoted to the rank of General. [redacted]

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Letter to Director

[redacted] noted that the reason SWERDLOFF was appointed to head the Polish Brigade was that [redacted] gave an opportunity to the Russians to say that they were [redacted] engaged in the Spanish Civil War and could point to SWERDLOFF as a Polish National who was the leader of the Polish Brigade.

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The source stated that SWERDLOFF was a frightened man and occupied most of his time at the front. He seldom consulted with the Russian Generals who were serving in Spain as advisers. These Russian military advisers became dissatisfied with SWERDLOFF due to his lack of cooperation and instructed a decision to get rid of him. When this info came to the source, he warned SWERDLOFF not to talk too much and to try to be more cooperative. The source further recalled that the Russian military advisers were charging that SWERDLOFF was politically unreliable.

According to [redacted] such a charge was untenable and, as a matter of fact, SWERDLOFF [redacted] devoted to Russia and Spain in their common fight against Hitler.

Mr. Seppes stated that it was an application that SWERDLOFF was recalled to Russia and that the Soviets offered to provide him with an automobile with which to travel out of Spain. He recalled that SWERDLOFF had told him that he very much desired to take along his diary so that one day he could use the notes for a book he intended to write on the strategy of [redacted].

The Source did not recall [redacted] offered to SWERDLOFF following his departure from Spain, but stated that following WW II, after Russia had taken over Poland, SWERDLOFF had made an appointment [redacted] in Chief of the Defense Ministry in Poland. The Source stated that he recalled reading in about 1946 in some newspaper article that SWERDLOFF had been killed by Soviet forces in Poland. The Source indicated that the rebellious Poles were anti-Soviet & anti-Semitic.

The above info was recalled in 1 other front rather than in a blind memo which would be distributed to the press and the info furnished by this Source is rather fragmentary and it is hoped that during future interviews further info will be elicited from him in which event, a more complete memo can be prepared upon the subject of the International Brigades in Spain during the Spanish Civil War.

SECRET